


# LUCY LEARNS TO WEAVE:

## Gathering Plants



NAVAJO CURRICULUM CENTER PRESS



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# LUCY LEARNS TO WEAVE:

## Gathering Plants

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ROUGH ROCK DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL  
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## *First of a Series..*

The Navajo Curriculum Center at Rough Rock is pleased to offer this reader for Navajo children and for children elsewhere who would like to learn about Navajo culture. It is the first of four such readers to be prepared by the Center to make reading relevant to Navajo children who, in the past, have gone to school and found little or nothing of their own people's culture in the books and materials they use. This book is in black and white because of the high cost of color printing, but a color filmstrip of the beautiful illustrations by Mr. Denetsosie is being prepared.

The Rough Rock Demonstration School, in operation since 1966, was the first school in the Navajo country to demonstrate successfully that an all-Navajo School Board, from the local community and chosen by it, was truly capable of operating a sizable institution for the education of its children. We have had the privilege of getting to know these men and to respect their wise leadership centered, as it is, on both practicality and concern for the human beings that comprise this school.

This group of leaders has specified that the curriculum will provide the children with a sound education in both English-language materials and Navajo-language materials. It is they who have made the decision that the youngster who receives a bilingual-bicultural education becomes a responsible Indian American, thus providing for future leadership by men and women who, from the beginnings of their lives, learned the best of both ways. Given the opportunity, these Navajo people have moved forward in that venerable Navajo tradition of adapting and adopting valuable cultural elements.



While this particular book is in English, others are in preparation in Navajo. The cultural details are accurate, taken from the true life stories of several fine Navajo weavers. The main point is to provide the children learning to read with materials with which they can identify personally in a positive way.

We believe that the individual who respects himself or herself is the individual who respects others in later life. This book is one small contribution toward the development which leads in that direction.

We also hope, of course, that children everywhere will enjoy the book sufficiently to make them want to learn more about the truly remarkable Navajo people. Navajo hearts are strong and warm in this land bounded by the four Sacred Mountains, with its great sandstone mesas and canyons — where the most modern things are seen together with lifeways given to the Navajos by the Holy People in the dawn of time.

*Martin Hoffman*, Director  
Navajo Curriculum Center

*Dillon Platero*, Director  
Rough Rock Demonstration School

# *Introduction*

*Lucy Learns to Weave: Gathering Plants* is the first in a series of books being prepared primarily for Navajo children still in the early stages of developmental reading programs. Its content and design, however, may make it valuable to non-Navajo children as well.

For years, Navajo youngsters have found little in their basic reading program or in the school library that reflects their Navajo heritage. This story and the others in the series are composites based on true incidents in the lives of real Navajo people.

Mr. Denetsosie illustrated this story with great care and feeling, recalling memories of family life with his own brothers and sisters. Through his artistry, each picture reflects with accuracy the action described in print below the illustration, as well as providing detail meaningful to Navajo children. Thus, the meaning of each sentence is immediately demonstrated for the young reader. Since Navajo students must learn English as a second language, clarity of meaning is essential.

Rough Rock teachers are finding that systematic presentation and practice of sound-letter patterns provides a crucial tool needed by Navajo students learning the decoding process. The vocabulary in this story is therefore limited to sound-letter patterns that students can unlock after a first-year reading course. Four words in this book are exceptions to the usual patterns: *Lucy, Mother, dye, your*. These may require introduction.

A fourth element has been incorporated for the child who opens a book for fun and then withdraws, discouraged by a block of print. Many Navajo children, thus discouraged, resort to the habit of "reading" only pictures. In this first book about Lucy, the reader usually will find only one line of print on each page. Progressing through the series of books, the reader will find a gradually increased amount of print per page.

Lucy's story is completed in the last book, when she feels the reward of weaving her first blanket, a distinct achievement in the life of a Navajo girl.

Most important, the design of this book is intended especially to make it valuable as independent and voluntary reading, reading for pleasure. In this regard, it carries the endorsement of the seven-year-old Navajo girls who read the manuscript.

"Lucy?" said one of the girls as she finished reading. "I know *her!*"

*Virginia Hoffman*  
March, 1969





Lucy walks with her sister to gather plants.





Then she skips.





Then she walks.





She walks by a plant.



Her sister tells her, "Pick this plant."



Lucy picks the plant.



She sticks the plant in her basket.





"Can I pick this plant?" Lucy asks her sister.



**"No, get that plant. Stick it in the basket,"  
Lucy's sister tells her.**



Lucy gets the plant and sticks it in her basket.



She walks. She sings as she walks,  
swinging her basket.





A bird sings with her.



He is flying and singing with her.



The singing bird is flying after Lucy,  
and Lucy is walking after her sister.







"I'll get seven," Lucy tells her sister.



Lucy picks and picks.



Then she sticks the plants in her basket.







She calls the bird to her finger.





"You can have this plant," she tells the bird.







"I'll give you this plant."





"That's better," Lucy tells him.  
"You still can sing and peck."



The bird flaps his wings and sings.  
Lucy walks and picks plants.





Lucy's sister helps her check the plants.

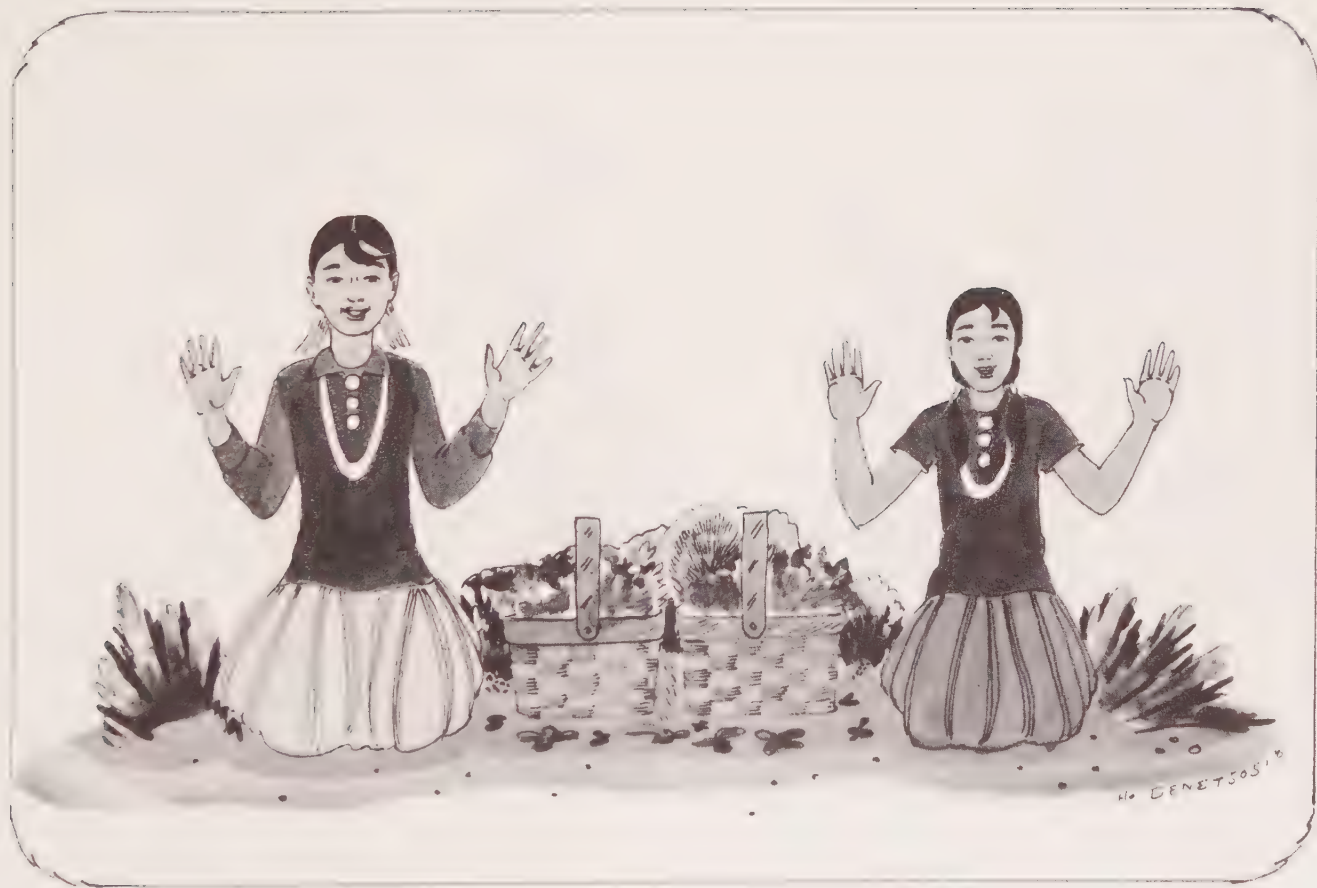




**"You have seven in the basket and seven  
in your hands." her sister tells her.**







"We have twenty plants!"





"Yes, let's!"



The girls walk on, singing and swinging the baskets.  
The baskets are filled with plants.



The sky is pink and red. It starts  
to get dark. Stars are filling the sky.





The girls start back with the baskets of plants.



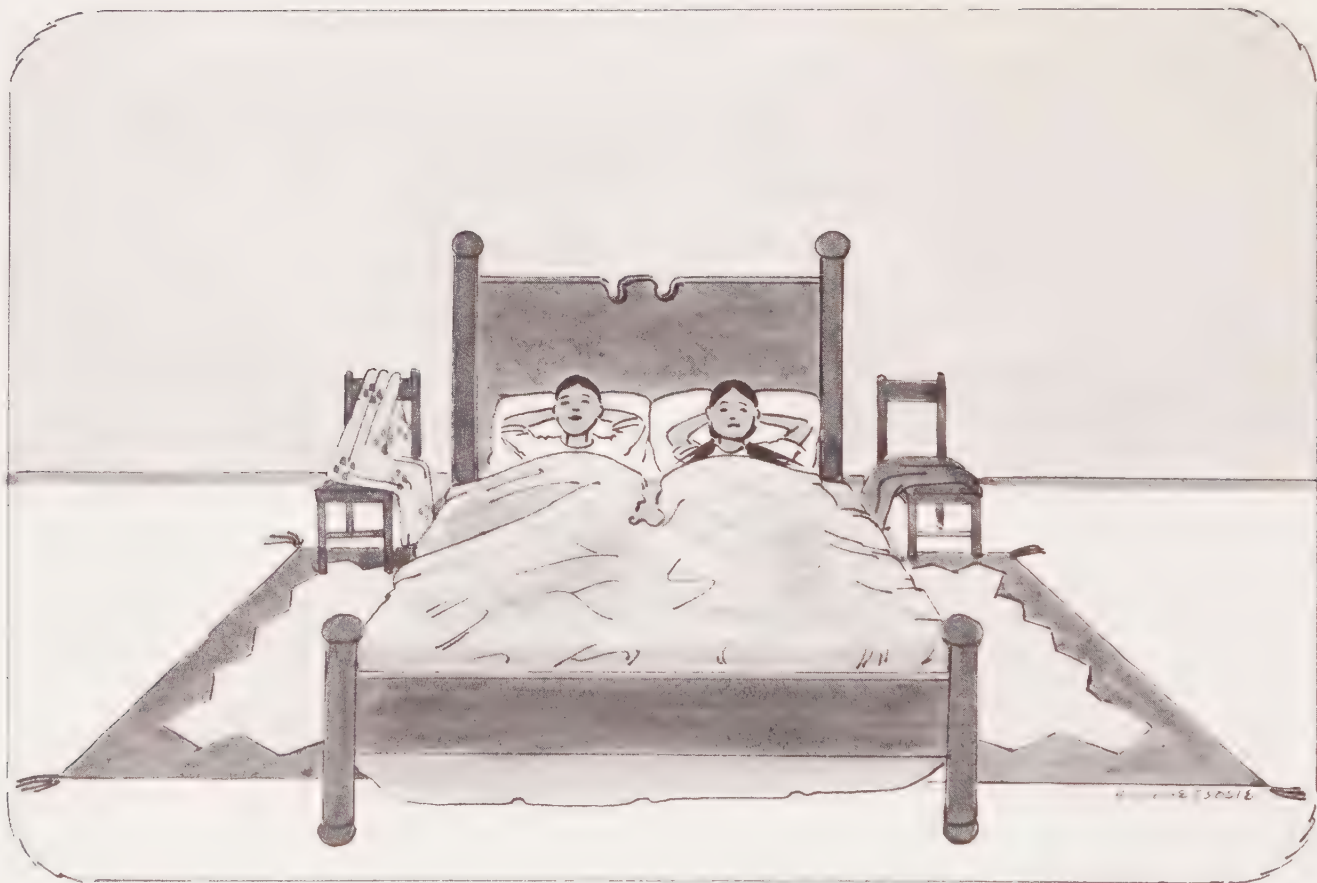
"Thank you," Mother tells them.



"Can we help dye the yarn?" the girls ask.

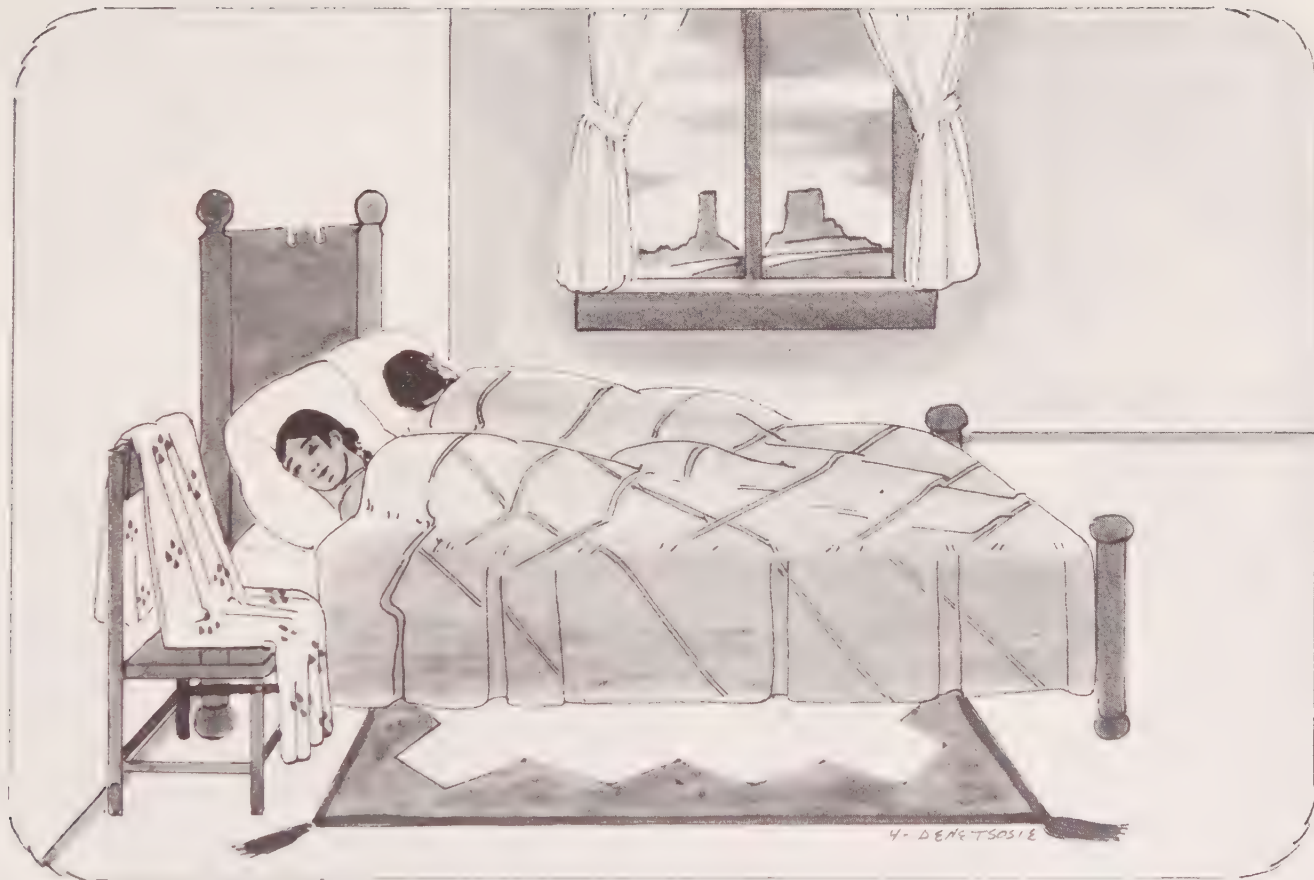


"Let's fix dinner first," Mother tells them.



The girls have dinner, and then get into bed.





The blankets on the bed are as pink  
and red as the sky.



"The girls can help dye the yarn the next day,"  
Mother thinks.



Thinking of the next day,  
she spins the last bit of yarn.





The girls are thinking of the plants  
and singing birds and stars.







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